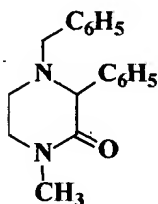


**CLAIMS**

We claim:

Claims 1 – 12 : (canceled)

13. (original): A piperazine derivative compound represented by Formula II below



Formula II

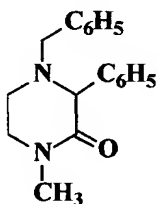
14. (new): A process for preparing 1-Methyl-3-phenylpiperazine represented by Formula I



Formula I

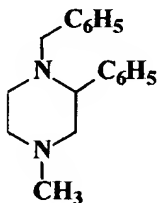
which comprises the steps of,

- reducing the compound of Formula II



Formula II

to obtain a compound of Formula VII



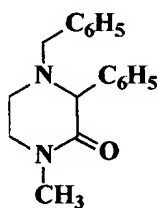
Formula VII

- and hydrogenating the compound of Formula VII.

15. (new): The process of claim 14, wherein the reducing step is conducted with lithium aluminum hydride.

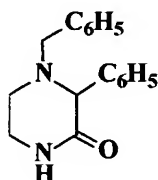
16. (new) : The process of claim 14, wherein the hydrogenation step is conducted in acetic acid in the presence of palladium-carbon catalyst.

17. (new) : A process according to claim 14, wherein compound of Formula II



Formula II

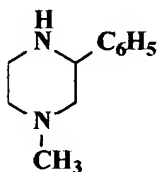
is prepared by methylation 4-benzyl-2-oxo-3-phenylpiperazine of Formula VI.



Formula VI

18. (new): The process of claim 17, wherein the said methylating step is conducted with methyl iodide in *N,N*-dimethylformamide in the presence of sodium hydride.

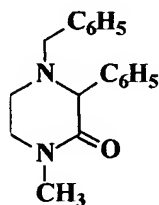
19. (new): A process for preparing 1-Methyl-3-phenylpiperazine represented by Formula I



Formula I

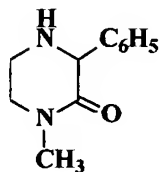
which comprises the steps of,

- hydrogenating compound of Formula II



Formula II

to prepare a compound of Formula VIII



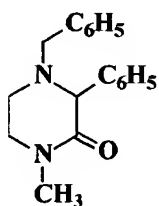
Formula VIII

- and reduction of compound of Formula VIII.

20. (new): The process of claim 19, wherein the hydrogenation step is conducted in acetic acid in the presence of palladium-carbon catalyst.

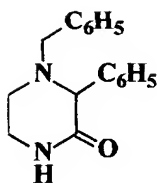
21. (new): The process of claim 19, wherein the reducing step is conducted with lithium aluminum hydride.

22. (new): A process according to claim 19, wherein compound of Formula II



Formula II

is prepared by methylation of 4-benzyl-2-oxo-3-phenylpiperazine of Formula VI

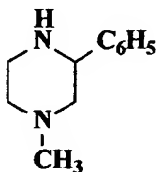


Formula VI

with methyl iodide in *N,N*-dimethylformamide in the presence of sodium hydride.

23. (new): The process of claim 22, wherein the said methylating step is conducted with methyl iodide in *N,N*-dimethylformamide in the presence of sodium hydride.

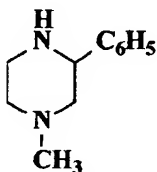
24. (new): A process for converting 1-methyl-3-phenylpiperazine of Formula I



Formula I

, prepared according to claim 14, to Mirtazapine.

25. (new) : A process for converting 1-methyl-3-phenylpiperazine of Formula I



Formula I

, prepared according to claim 19, to Mirtazapine.